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224 The Indians go in twos and threes on these hunts. In the jungle close to the settlements, the agouti (*Dasyprocta* sp.) is the most common game; after that, a
262 rodent, the *paca* (*Coelogenys paca*), and the raccoon, *coatí* (*Nasua socialis*). With
136 some persistence the Tukuna are still able to collect for the obligatory roasts (*moquedo*) of the feasts enough monkeys of the following species: *prego* (*Cebus* sp.), *barrigudo* (*Lagothrix* sp.), *coatá* (*Ateles* sp.), *paruacú* (*Pithecia* sp.), and *guariba* (*Alouatta* sp.).

The following animals are so rare as to lack economic importance: *coandú* (*Cercolabes* sp.); anteater, *mambira* (*Myrmecophaga tetradactyla*); armadillo, *tatú* (*Dasypus* sp.). The otter, *lontra* (*Pteroneura* sp.), another enemy of fishermen, is never eaten.

Of feathered game the most important are a forest turkey, the *mutum* (*Mitua*
223 *mitu*); the *jacú* (*Penelope* sp.); and wild pigeons (*Columba* sp.; *Leptoptila* sp.).
262 The red and yellow macaws, *araras* (*Ara macao* and *A. ararauna*, respectively),
136 parrots (*Amazona* sp.), parakeets (*Conurus* sp.), toucans (*Rhamphastos* sp.), and *japú* (*Ostinops decumanus*, Pall.) are killed more for their feathers than for their flesh.

The vulture, *urubú* (*Cathartes urubu*), is not eaten, nor are the *anhumá* (*Palamedea cornuta*) or the *cigana* (*Opisthocomus hoazin*).

As for caimans, the Indians will occasionally eat the young of the species called
225 *jacaré-tinga* (*Caiman yacare*) by the Neobrazilians. The tortoise, jabóti (*Testudo*
262 *tabulata*),[a] is little used. The Tukuna will eat some species of snakes.

136 *Weapons.*—Almost all the Indians now hunt with firearms, some with simple muzzle-loading smoothbores, others with good, breech-loading; double-barrelled
411 pieces. Very infrequently some still use the blowgun, *caruatána*, originally their national weapon for small game, above all, for monkeys.

The Tukuna blowgun (i"ë') is the largest of all those known, being usually more
411 than 3 m. long. With the aid of tools now at their disposal, the Tukuna manufacture
322 it as follows. The material they prefer is a solid-ground jungle tree called *punau* (*Iryanthera tricornis*, Ducke; T., pu'rune), lacking which they substitute the wood of the *bacabinha* (*Oenocarpus multicaulis* Spr.?), called in Tukuna "nyë." They bring to the house a piece of sufficient size, trim it, and later work it into the shape of a long, slender rod with four planed surfaces, 3.5 m. long by 7 cm. After sawing this lengthwise through the center, they gouge out a longitudinal furrow some 6 cm. wide from end to end in each section. Near the house, they then seek a tree, which should have a thick, more or less horizontal limb about 6 m. above the ground. From this limb they stretch a length of *cipó guembé* (*Philodendron* sp.) vertically to the ground, and lash a beam to it horizontally just above the ground, its weight keeping the cipó taut.

Around this length of peeled cipó they erect a platform of saplings, permitting a craftsman to stand erect, close to the cipó and about 2.5 m. above the ground; another man stays on the ground below. To the length of cipó they then bind the two lengths of wood, with the grooved sides facing inward, and pour over them water containing sand. The two pieces, now strongly bound together so as to form one unit, they pull up and down, keeping the cipó tightly stretched. With this

[a] On p. 19 the author calls this *Emys tabulata* as well.—Trans.

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For the deer that invade the plantations, pitfalls (a:'maĮ°) are dug to the depth of a meter and a half, a sharpened paxiuba stake being set vertically at the bottom. In a pitfall that I saw, a dog had died, and a few days later an alligator also fell into it. 224

Gathering

The gathering of wild fruits and the capture of animals that cannot properly be included under hunting are still carried on by both sexes; by men when the opportunity presents itself and by women on trips made for the purpose. 222 [462]

There are many varieties of edible wild fruits, although most have no economic importance, being no more than mere tidbits, like the pods of the *arara tucupy*, the seeds of which are covered with a thin layer of thick, sweet liquid. The only fruits of real economic importance are those of the four palms, burity (*Mauritia vinifera*), *bacabeira* (*Oenocarpus bacaba*), *patauá* (*Oenocarpus patauá*), and açahy (*Euterpe* sp.). All four species are common in the jungles of the Tukuna. During the period of gathering one always sees large earthenware vessels containing burity fruits soaked in a solution to make the rinds come off more easily, and the Indians constantly help themselves. The fruits of these four palms are then macerated in tepid water and a fatty drink is prepared by a process common among the Neobrazilians as well, the separation of the pulp from the stones by treading. The liquid is passed through a very fine sieve (va'ri-činj-į°ń, from va'ira, açahy). A sufficient quantity is then prepared so that the neighbors may be invited to drink also. The gathering of the fruits and the preparation of the beverage are feminine tasks. 222 824 262 [415] 272 [171] [462]

The Tukuna are acquainted with the Brazil nut, or niggertoe, *castanha do Pará* (*Bertholletia excelsa*), but they eat only the kernels without preparing from them either milk or oil. Nino, an Indian of Igarapé da Rita, had planted near his house about ten such saplings, which were then bearing fruit. 262 [245]

The Tukuna will not eat toads, though they do not reject various species of frogs; they also eat beetle larvae, which are found in burity palms, and the queens of *saúva* ants (l.g., *içá; Atta cephalotes*) when they are swarming. Of the various kinds of honey the most appreciated is that of the wild bee, jandaíra. Bees are not raised at home. [263]

Food

The most common food is fish, either boiled or freshly smoked and eaten with farinha (formerly with beijús). Seasoning is obtained by thrusting the fingertip into a small dish with crushed salt and pepper and then licking it. At present, the salt is bought from the Neobrazilians, but it is said that in the old days it was prepared from the ash from burned green maraja palm leaves. 262 [263] [459]

Of fish, the Indian takes only as much as he can swallow at one gulp, picking it, with a rapid pinch of the fingers, from the common receptacle. In consequence, the piece of fish shortly assumes such a tattered appearance that it looks like nothing more than a dog's dinner. 264

When there is roast game, no one cuts himself a large piece, but each in turn seizes the meat, tears off a chunk with the teeth, and tosses the remainder back

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264 into the common vessel. This gesture is as common as the pinch of the fingers. The Tukuna eat neither avidly nor hastily. During and after the meal they belch unreservedly and with evident satisfaction. Each one gets up when satisfied, goes to the platform where the water jugs are kept, washes his hands and mouth, and takes a swallow.

252 When the fish or meat have been on the smoking-rack (moquem) for many days
262 and have thus become too hard, they are cooked with scraped green bananas until the mess completely disintegrates, the whole turning into a coarse pap (l.g., *mogica*). These are the two main foods.

Aside from these regular meals, however, someone frequently prepares a little snack over the kitchen fire, roasting either on the coals or on a spit a green banana, an ear of maize, sweet manioc root or yam tuber, or even, on the grill, bundles of green leaves containing a frog, a handful of beetle larvae, or minnows. The yam, especially, may be called the bread of the Tukuna.

Beverages

272 I have already mentioned the beverages prepared from the fruits of the burity, bacabeira, patauá, and açahy palms. Later on we shall see the great importance of fermented drinks in the social and economic life of the Tukuna, as well as the injurious effects of intoxication, their one vice.

273 There are three principal fermented drinks for ceremonies: (1) čavʲ-čʲˈʲ, a maize drink (l.g., chicha); (2) čaʲᵃ, from boiled sweet manioc (l.g., *caiçuma*); (3) pa'yavaru, from burned manioc flat cakes (l.g., *paiauarú*).

[114] The first and second are pre-Columbian. Tessman's statement that the Tukuna
[177] do not use beverages made of maize is erroneous. The paiauarú was probably adopted from the Neobrazilian population which speaks the lingua geral; it is little used by the Neobrazilians of today.

For chicha, dry, ripe maize is pounded by the rocking-board; water is placed to heat over the fire and, when it boils, the meal is slowly dropped in and constantly stirred. It is permitted to boil until it becomes soft, when it is removed from the fire. A mouthful of a certain, special kind of sweet potato (*Batatas edulis* or *Ipomoea batatas*) is masticated and placed on top of the boiled maize, but without mixing it. Only after the mass of potato has settled is the combination stirred
[237] with a spatula made from the shoulder blade of a manatee (T., kɔ'ruvë). The person who chews the sweet potato first washes his mouth and chews the leaves of a plant called vɔ'ča, which stings the mouth and lips, turning them and the tongue black. Finally, the liquid is strained through a sieve into a jar, where it remains. Generally, it will have turned potent by the following day.

To prepare caiçuma, the Tukuna peel a sweet manioc tuber, cut it into small pieces, and crush it to a pulp with the rocking-board. To the mass they add a gourdful of sweet potato and strain it through a sieve into a jar. A little cane molasses speeds up the fermentation.

Paiauarú is made in the following way. A sufficient quantity of manioc cakes is made, the cakes being baked in the oven until slightly burnt on the surface, when they are placed in a wide-meshed basket and dipped for an instant into hot water. The dough, about two or three fingers thick, is then spread out on banana

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the spirits' arrows. Also, the spirits of dead trees may be present anywhere in the neighborhood and wound those with whom they collide. A person with an overheated body feels the arrow wound from a spirit as a fillip with the fingertips. This is the supposed cause of some deaths, due ultimately to the malefactions of some shaman. The most dangerous tree of all is the *caapi cipó* (*Banisteria* sp.), which the Tukuna know only by its Peruvian name of *ayahuasca*, sometimes corrupted into čučuva'ču. It is strange that they are unaware of the plant's qualities; because of this ignorance they do not prepare from it any narcotic, as do the neighboring Indians. Thus, they know that the Kokáma possess a plant which produces visions; but only one Tukuna, now deceased, learned from them its use as a narcotic, and he did not pass the knowledge along to anyone else.

According to my informants, the chief Domingos čʉ'nekʲ, a curing shaman (p. 65) had a different method of stimulating visions. There is a cultivated tree with small, white, calycine flowers which, when broken open, exhibit a liquid. Placing drops of this in his eyes, čʉ'nekʲ succeeded in seeing the demon dyĕ'vaĕ (see p. 120), as well as other demons (ño:'), and the tree spirits; he could also discover his enemies. Other trees possessing spirits are the kapok, *sumahuma*, whose spirit is identified with the forest demon Caapora of the lingua geral, the *manixy* (?), the *açacú* (*Hura crepitans*), the muirapiranga, the *ucuhuba* (*Virola* sp.), and a tree which reaches at the most a diameter of fifteen centimeters and is called in Tukuna na'iⁿ-ya-dyʉ'ʲ, that is, "shaman log." Its wood has an odor similar to that of laurel, and the soil around its trunk is always barren.

Instruction of a shaman.—Any person who wishes to become a shaman must be placed in contact with the spirits of the trees by another person already initiated. Some shamans begin to educate their sons when the boys are six years old. Usually, however, the aspirant betakes himself to a master of recognized fame, whom he pays for instruction. This teacher begins only after sunset. Within only two months' time the disciple (nyĕna'rʲkatʲ) possesses the most necessary knowledge for curing through suction and by the application of herbs or other medicinal substances.

During this period of instruction he must abstain from sexual intercourse and must follow a diet, eating only certain fishes (cachorra, trahira, sardinha, curimatá, carañacú vermelho, and jejú, but no scaleless fish) and green bananas, taking care that these last are straight and not curved as they usually are. Among birds especially recommended to him are macucáua (*Tinamus* sp.) and *tangurupará* (*Monassa* sp.). All of his food must contain very little salt; he should completely abstain from pepper, fats, sweets, and alcoholic beverages and should also avoid exposure to the sun.

Initiation is in two parts: in the first, the master presents to the disciple a portion of the magical substances in his body; in the second, he places him in contact with the spirits of the trees. The disciple is specially prepared for the initiation; he must drink a gourdful of tobacco infusion so as to vomit all impurities (puya) acquired through sexual contact; after which he must wash out his mouth. The infusion leaves him in a state of narcosis. The master, by massaging his own body, directs toward his mouth all the magical substances which he possesses, vomiting them in the form of slime (ta:'kaka; l.g., *tacacá*, a beverage of manioc starch). Holding the slime in the palm of his hand, he shows this to the disciple, inviting him to

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CULTURE

SUBSISTENCE ACTIVITIES

241 **Farming.**—The main *Tucuna* crops are bitter manioc, sweet manioc (macaxera), cara (*Dioscorea*), and maize. The last is planted with some ceremony. There are also at least three species of edible tubers which are not used by civilized people.

226 227 **Fishing and hunting.**—Fish, of great importance to the *Tucuna*, are taken with four- to nine-pronged javelins, arrows, harpoon arrows, baskets, weirs, traps, and a drug made of timbó. The Indians fish almost daily from childhood. On the Solimões, they are expert fishers of pirarucú, an important article of commerce.

224 177 411 Hunting today is unimportant, since game has been depleted to fill the demand for hides. The *Tucuna* now use firearms, but formerly employed the bow and arrow, spear, and blowgun. They also use pitfalls and several types of snares and traps. The blowgun, once the principal weapon, is disappearing.

222 262 [145] **Gathering.**—The wild burity, bacaba, patauá, and açahy palms are of great economic value. Some *Tucuna* plant Brazil nut trees near their houses. They eat certain frogs, Coleoptera larvae, and female red ants at hiving time. They like wild honey but keep no bees.

231 **Domesticated animals.**—The *Tucuna* raise a few chickens, but do not want hogs or other domestic animals because they dirty the premises. They keep young wild mammals and birds uncaged.

412 252 [177] [434] **Food preparation.**—Instead of a mortar, the *Tucuna* use a trough with a half-moon-shaped rocker of thick and heavy wood.

The making of manioc flour, introduced by the Neo-Brazilians, became one of the principal sources of income among the *Tucuna*.

HOUSES

342 The old houses had a small rectangular central portion with a short ridge pole mounted on props. Each end was semicircular, so that the ground plan was oval or nearly round. The walls were of a man's height, and were made of boards of paxiuba or of straw. The house could be sealed tight against mosquitoes. Families occupied the lateral corridors, the central space being reserved for ceremonies. All houses were spacious and well built.

177 342 352 513 The introduction of mosquito nets made house walls unnecessary. People slept on bunks along the walls, covered with mosquito nets, instead of in hammocks. Many houses were built without the semicircular extremities but with a longer central part, being like an open rectangular ranch house with a ridge pole. When the tribe occupied the flood plains of the shores and islands, they built houses on piles.

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More than among other tribes, *Tucuna* children receive corporal punishment, especially with the external application of nettle flowers that are grown for this purpose at the edge of the yard. They play with dolls carved of muirapiranga, figures of animals, little canoes, small bows and arrows, and buzz-disks of gourd shells.

Boys' puberty observances.—There is a tradition that in former times, young men were initiated when their voices changed, being secluded and then perhaps formally admitted to the secrets of the megaphone (tá/ki) through an application of snuff called ká/vi, which is still used occasionally. There are no vestiges of homosexuality, as claimed by Tessmann (1930, p. 563).

Girls' puberty rites.—At her first menstruation, a girl is secluded in the house loft. This is not so cruel as certain travelers (Bates, 1863, 2:406) proclaim. Every girl submits willingly, convinced that her peculiar condition requires it and that its omission would be dangerous, as she is surrounded by invisible "immortals" and demons, who seek contact with her and at times cause extraordinary supernatural experiences. Many stories told to a girl in seclusion illustrate this dangerous state.

The people hasten to prepare for the girl a circular seclusion room adjacent to the east or west wall of the house, according to her moiety. They decorate the walls with painted bands and lines, and figures of the sun, moon, morning star, and deer, the last a symbol of vigilance and not a "totem."

Preparations for the feast sometimes require months. They prepare roast meat and beverages and make the house ready. The girl's father is host, but her paternal uncle and his wife direct all ceremonies concerning her person, being wholly responsible for her. Friends and acquaintances receive two invitations to the feast; the second, which specifies the date, is issued to the sound of the bark trumpet, which is carried hidden in the canoe.

In the exterior portion of the house, corresponding to the girl's seclusion room, a long fence is made with straw walls to conceal the megaphone (tá/ki), its statues, and the bark trumpet which operate behind it each night of the feast and are removed before daybreak and hidden underwater in the creek. People are chosen and invited to operate these instruments by the head of the house when the time comes; there is no permanent assignment. Inside the fence of the megaphone, snuff (ká/vi) or tobacco powder is taken with several ingredients (but not parica). The snuff is kept in a snail shell and blown into the nose by means of an apparatus made of a tubular bone and two quills of royal sparrow hawk feathers, or by means of a simple taboca (bamboo) tube. Boys of 7 or older customarily are given snuff, after which they may see and touch the instruments within the fence, which are taboo to women and to boys who have not yet had it.

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At this feast, as at the feast of children's depilation and ear piercing, masks are used (pl. 65, *top*). These are made, used, and cared for by the guests, who portray anything they wish, such as imaginary demons and fantastic animals. They are in no way associated with individual persons, societies, or other groups. The masked persons customarily remain unidentified until they deliver their masks to the host. About 90 percent of those wearing masks are men, 7 percent boys, and the remainder girls and young women. For costume, clothing is cut and sewn from the bast fiber of certain trees (*Ficus* sp.), sometimes in the shape of pants, sleeves, and fringes, and at other times in the form of a tight gown without sleeves, extending half way down the leg. The face, generally a horrendous caricature of a demon (pl. 64, *top, right*), may be attached to or separate from the costume. The mask representing the storm demon is distinguished by an enormous face and a phallus nearly 18 inches (½ m.) long. Nearly all clothes are painted with vegetable dyes. Sometimes the motif of the mask is identified by the song rather than by the appearance of the mask, which is entirely a product of the individual's imagination. The masked people, sometimes numbering 40 to 50, gather in a special place in the woods, and go to the house in groups up to 10, some of them running up and down at a furious pace, and others approaching slowly. They come for a drink, then disappear to make way for another group.

At the appointed time the guests arrive at the house with their families, sometimes numbering more than 300 persons. They are received inside along the walls, the center being left open for the ceremonies. When all have assembled, they go to the kitchen to be painted with urucú and to have their faces decorated with royal sparrow hawk down. After everyone receives a piece of roast meat, all return in a solemn procession to the house and put their meat on a stand on the side of the seclusion room. On the other side are the vessels of beverages. The feast now begins. Henceforth, everyone goes around the central space in the house singing to the accompaniment of small drums and carrying his dancing stick on his shoulder.

Early in the morning, the girl is brought through a door from the seclusion room to the fenced place around the megaphone where, with her face turned to the proper cardinal point, she is adorned with genipa and white turury that have been ceremonially prepared. Before sunset, she is decorated in the seclusion room with streamers of royal sparrow hawk plumage, a long macaw feather diadem, feather bracelets with white turury fringes, strings of feathers made of toucan abdomens and tails, shell bells with bone clappers, and ear pegs, which are prepared by skilled persons and tried out by her relatives. The women fan her with broad leaves. She then stands in her room facing the place where the megaphone and trumpet are sounded and scratching herself with a little stick. The guests in the main room are given meat and fish stew and cooked bananas.